DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 348 391 TM 018 811

AUTHOR Plake, Barbara S.
TITLE Commercially Available Instrumentation: A Resource for Educational Researchers.
PUB DATE Apr 92
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council on Measurement in Education (San Francisco, CA, April 21-23, 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Assessment; Educational Research; Evaluation Criteria; Measurement Techniques; *Measures (Individuals); Researchers; *Resource Materials; *Test Reviews; Test Selection
IDENTIFIERS *Commercially Prepared Materials; *Mental Measurements Yearbook

ABSTRACT

The "Mental Measurements Yearbook" (MMY) series has provided researchers and practitioners with availability and evaluative information about commercially available English-language tests for over 50 years. However, two myths exist that are believed by some users of these resources. The first myth is that there are some minimum quality criteria that determine the inclusion of a test in the MMY series. The second myth is that each volume represents an exhaustive listing of all commercially available instruments. The purpose of this paper is to document the test identification process that locates tests for review in the MMY series, and to articulate the criteria that these tests must meet to be reviewed in the MMY series. Commercially available English-language tests are eligible. A test that has been listed in one volume will not normally be reviewed again. No minimum standard of quality is applied, and reviewers do not do their own testing, relying instead on information supplied by the publisher. The new publication schedule for the MMY series is explained, and plans for new products are outlined. The MMY series has the potential to be an invaluable resource for instrument identification and critique. Educational researchers need to be informed about the utility of the product. The publication history of the MMY and an explanation of the MMY database are included in table form. (SLD)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED348391

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

BARBARA S. PLAKE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

# Commercially Available Instrumentation: A Resource for Educational Researchers

Barbara S. Plake

Buros Institute of Mental Measurements

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Paper presented at the 1992 annual meeting of the National Council on Measurement in Education, San Francisco

TM018811



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Commercially Available Instrumentation:

A Resource for Educational Researchers

(Abstract)

The Mental Measurements Yearbook series has provided researchers and practitioners with availability and evaluative information about commercially available English language tests for over 50 years. However, there are two myths believed by some users of these resources. The first myth is that there are minimum quality criteria that determine the inclusion of a test in the MMY series. The second myth is that each volume in the series represents an exhaustive listing of all commercially available instruments. The purpose of this paper is to document the test identification process that is undertaken to locate tests for review in the MMY series and to articulate the criteria these tests must meet in order to be reviewed in the MMY series. In addition, the new publication schedule for the MMY series is explained and plans for new products are outlined. The Mental Measurements Yearbook series has the potential to serve as an invaluable resource for instrument identification and critique. However, educational researchers need to be informed about the utility of the product so their instrument identification and evaluation process can proceed effectively and efficiently.

Commercially Available Instrumentation:

A Resource for Educational Researchers

Over 50 years ago, Oscar Kristen Buros published the 1938 Mental Measurements Yearbook thus establishing a series dedicated to candidly critical reviews of commercially available tests. That series has been well received by researchers and practitioners as an essential resource for identifying instruments for their use. However, there are misconceptions about the scope of tests reviewed and the review process. In addition, some changes have occured recently in the Institute which impact the availability of the review information.

The purpose of this presentation is to provide updated information on this commonly recognized resource for information on commercially available tests: The Mental Measurements Yearbook series. The discussion will address the following questions: (1) How are tests identified for review in the series? (2) How are the reviews achieved? (3) When are reviews of the tests made available? and (4) What product published by the Buros Institute complements the Mental Measurements Yearbook series?

How are tests identified for review in the series?

First and foremost, to qualify for review in the Mental Measurements Yearbook, a test must be in the English language and commercially available. While the Institute is very liberal in the operational definition of "commercially available", tests used for proprietary purposes in business or industry, for example, will not be subjected to the scrutiny of the Institute's review process since they are not sold to the public.

Second, the MMY series is organized hierarchically; this means that a test that has been reviewed previously in the series will not normally be re-reviewed in a subsequent Yearbook. The focus in new Yearbooks is on new or revised instruments. Occasionally, a previously reviewed test is reviewed again if it has received substantial attention since the previous review, or the previous reviewed is dated, or there is some controversy about the earlier review that suggests to us that a re-review may be advisable.

There are two important points about the process of identifying tests for review. First, there is no minimal standard of quality for a test to meet to be included in the Yearbook. Occasionally users err in believing that a test must meet some minimal standards for acceptability to be included in the Yearbook series. Second, publishers provide instruments to the Institute for review on a voluntary basis. Therefore, even though the

Institute may have identified a test for review, unless the publisher cooperates by providing the necessary materials to accomplish the review, the test will not be included in the Yearbook series. Most publishers are eager to have their tests reviewed in the Yearbook series, even when the reviews are highly critical. In fact, we have been informed that a test review appearing in the Mental Measurements Yearbook series has a positive effect on sales, even when the review is less than supportive. This is may be related to the misconception that there is some minimal standard of quality implied for a test appearing in the MMY series.

The Institute uses a fairly broad-based search procedure to locate new or revised tests. Principally, this is achieved by contacts with publishers, either through direct notification by the publisher of a new test or through review of publishers' catalogs. In addition, staff will occasionally notice a possible new test in the process of preparing tests for publication in the Yearbook. One feature of the Mental Measurements Yearbook test reviews is, in addition to the critical review provided by the reviewers, a listing of references that have been located in the scholarly literature that involved the instrument. These citations are located by staff members (usually graduate students employed by the Institute) who read through most of the educational and psychological journals looking for articles that use the tests in the research studies. As an outcome of this activity, tests are identified that have not been brought to the attention of

the Institute via publishers' communications or advertisements. Follow-up of these possible new tests often yields tests that are subsequently included in the Yearbook series. A final source of test identification is through customer contact. Often the Institute receives calls from users interested in the status of a review of a particular test; occasionally the customer will bring to our attention a test that had not previously surfaced for review through our other identification methods.

How are the reviews achieved?

Typically, the publisher is requested to supply three copies of the test and accompanying documentation, in particular the technical manual. It is not uncommon, however, for the publishers to release a test to the public prior to the final publication of the accompanying technical manual; this will slow down the review process as the Institute prefers to provide the complete set of supporting materials to the reviewers.

Once a test has been identified for review, two reviewers are selected to provide a critical analysis of the test. Typically, two reviewers are identified for each test. Care is taken in the selection of reviewers to ensure: (a) the reviewer is competent in the content area of the test, (b) the reviewer does not have a conflict on interest, and (c) the reviewers complement each other in orientation and perspective. The Institute is constantly updating the list of persons who serve as reviewers.

Reviewers are identified by their prominence in the field, their recommendation by other reviewers or colleagues, and by self identification. The Institute solicits nominations for reviewers at the annual conferences where exhibits of Institute products are presented. The Institute often presents an exhibit of products and programs at AERA, NCME, APA, and NASP.

Once a reviewer has agreed to review for the Institute, the reviewer is usually sent two tests to review and given a 3 - 6 month deadline. The reviewer is provided with all the relevant materials sent to us by the publisher. In addition, the reviewer is sent a set of quidelines but is encouraged to use his or her own criteria for accomplishing the review.

One frequently used description of the Institute's test review process is that the Institute "tests the tests". Occasionally the process is stated to be like that of Consumer Reports, which publishes evaluations of commercially available products. While that analogy is useful in some ways, it is also the basis of a misconception on the part of the public. Typically, the reviewers to not do any data gathering on their own in their evaluation of the test; they are not asked to do any validity studies to assess the utility of the test or to empirically substantiate publisher's claims. Instead, the reviewers' task is to review the materials provided by the publisher to determine if the test has been shown to support the publisher's claims of validity and reliability. The reviewer is free to seek additional information about the test beyond that provided

by the publisher (either by calling the publisher directly or by looking for articles in the literature relevant to the instrument being reviewed).

When are reviews of the tests made available?

It is the Institute's goal to provide the review information to the public is a timely fashion. This goal is often difficult to achieve for a number of reasons. First, it can take some time for the Institute to become aware of the availability of a new or revised test. Once the test is identified, communications with the publisher can be lengthy; delays often occur at this juncture. Once the publisher provides the Institute with the accompanying material, it is sometimes incomplete and a decision needs to be made about whether to hold up on the review until technical materials are complete from the publisher. It is not uncommon for technical manuals to follow test publication by over a year. Once the test materials are in hand, the reviewer identification process begins.

The review process begins with invitations sent to a pair of reviewers; upon receiving an acceptance to the invitation, the test materials are sent to the reviewers. At times, one reviewer selected for a test declines, either because of time constraints or conflict of interest (even though we attempt to eliminate reviewers with conflicts of interest, the reviewer is obligated to self identify such conflicts that the Institute was not aware of). In this case, the materials are sent to the

reviewer who accepts and another reviewer is found to provide the second review of the test.

Once the reviewer has completed the review, it is transmitted to the Institute for processing. The Institute staff looks over the review and verifies every factual statement provided by the reviewer; for example, if the reviewer states that there were 4003 whites in the norming sample, the staff checks the correctness of that statement by finding the source of the information in the supporting materials of the test. If a statement of fact appears to be in error or cannot be verified, the reviewer will be queried about the correctness of the statement. The reviews are also edited for style and grammar by the Yearbook editors. Once the fact checking and editing is complete on a pair of reviews, the test reviews are ready for release to the public.

Occasionally, due to delays in the identification of the reviewer pair or in completion of the review by the reviewers, one review for a test will be ready for release far in advance of the pair. At this juncture a decision is made regarding the advisability of completing the second review. In nearly all cases, it is the strong preference of the Institute to have two reviews presented for every test, but the companion goal of timely publication of the reviews sometimes necessitates sacrificing the desire for two complete reviews per test. The decision is a function of (a) how soon the companion review is likely to be completed, (b) how close the publication date is

for the next MMY, (c) how dominant the test is in the field, and (d) how balanced the single review is of the strengths and weaknesses of the test.

Once the reviews are ready for release, there are two modes of publication of the test reviews. The most well known source of the test reviews is in the Mental Measurements Yearbook series. Prior to 1989, Yearbooks were published on an occasional basis, generally every 6 - 8 years. Table 1 shows the history of publication dates for the Mental Measurements Yearbook series prior to 1989. In 1989, the Institute embarked on a more ambitious publication schedule and program. It is the intent of the Institute to publish a hardbound Yearbook every other year. In the years in between publication of hardbound Yearbooks, a soft bound Supplement will appear that contains completed reviews for the next hardbound Yearbook. Thus, the Institute has adopted a publication schedule that matches the name and dream provided by the founder: it is virtually a yearly publication.

The second mode of access to reviews is through an electronically searchable database, Mental Measurements Yearbook Database -- MMYD, available on BRS Informations Technologies, a division of Maxwell Online Services. The MMYD contains test review information starting with the Eighth Mental Measurements Yearbook and is searchable using common search algorithms for characteristics such as test name, population, and test subscores. An overview of the MMYD system is attached to this

paper. Reviews are transmitted to BRS on a monthly basis; therefore the database provides a very timely and efficient resource for test review information.

The Institute is in the process of developing a CDROM product containing test reviews. The first product in this line is projected to be available in late summer, 1992.

One outcome of the more frequent publication schedule is that the volumes necessarily contain fewer tests. While this results in a product that is more manageable in size, it also means than the number of reviews in any one content category will be less that when the volumes were published on a less frequent basis. Users will likely need to check two or more volumes of the Yearbook to get a comprehensive list of commercially available tests that are pertinent to their needs. This is seen as a limitation of the frequent publication schedule, but one that the Institute elected to accept given the companion benefit of more timely communication of test information. In addition, the Institute is actively considering repackaging test reviews into content domains, collecting reviews of tests over 2 - 3 Yearbooks; this product would provide concentrated access to review information for speciality content areas.

What product published by the Buros Institute complements the Mental Measurements Yearbook Series?

In addition to the Mental Measurements Yearbook series and MMYD, the Institute publishes a volume that in an integral part of the review information system. This product series, called Tests in Print (TIP), provides a complete listing on all English language commercially available tests known to be in print at the time of publication. Therefore, unlike the Mental Measurements Yearbook series' hierarchical structure whereby only new or revised tests appear in subsequent volumes in the series, the TIP series provides a comprehensive complete listing of commercially available tests. Test information provided in this series is strictly descriptive, documenting such details as publisher, publication dates, the number and type of scales or subscales reported, and price. In addition, and useful for locating reviews in the MMY series, the test entry also identifies where in the MMY series that test has been reviewed. If the test has been reviewed more than once, all reviews are indexed. This provides a handy system for locating test review information in the Yearbook series.

## Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to document the test identification process that is undertaken to locate tests for review in the MMY series and to articulate the criteria these tests must meet to be reviewed in the MMY series. In addition,

the new publication schedule for the MMY series is explained and plans for new products are outlined. The Mental Measurements Yearbook series has the potential to serve as an invaluable resource for instrument identification and critique. However, educational researchers need to be informed about the utility of the product so that their instrument identification and evaluation process can proceed effectively and efficiently.

Table 1

Publication History of

Mental Measurements Yearbooks

| Volume | Date | # of Tests |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1938 | 312 |
| 2 | 1941 | 502 |
| 3 | 1949 | 663 |
| 4 | 1953 | 793 |
| 5 | 1959 | 957 |
| 6 | 1965 | 1,219 |
| 7 | 1972 | 1,157 |
| 8 | 1978 | 1,184 |
| 9 | 1985 | 1,409 |

# Mental Measurements Yearbook

**Database Label:**
MMYD

**Scope:**
MMYD contains factual information, critical reviews, and reliability and validity information on all English language tests covered in the *Eighth, Ninth,* and *Tenth Mental Measuremenis Yearbooks.* New descriptions and reviews to be included in future yearbooks are added to the database regularly. The database is especially valuable to counselors, guidance workers, psychologists, personnel directors, and educators for use as a resource tool in selecting and evaluating appropriate tests.

**Producer:**
Buros Institute of Mental Measurements
University of Nebraska - Lincoln
135 Bancroft Hall
Lincoln, NE 68588-0348

**Contact:**
402-472-6203

**Years of Coverage:**
1972 to present

**Total Size:**
2460 documents (July 1989)

**Updates:**
Monthly

**Database Copyright:**
Buros Institute of Mental Measurements. All rights reserved.

**Print Counterparts:**
*Eighth, Ninth,* and *Tenth Mental Measurements Yearbooks* (and Yearbooks to follow).

**BIBL Fields for BRS/Search Service:**
AN, TN, AU, PB, PD

**Display Formats for Menu-Driven Services:**
Short: AN, TN, AU, PB, PD
Medium: AN, TN, AU, PB, PD, HITS
Long: All Fields

## RECORD STRUCTURE

| Label | Field | Function | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| AN | Accession Number | search | 1012-327<br>1012 with 327.an.<br>0905-2910.an. |
| OC | Occurrence Table | display only | --- |
| TN | Test Name | search | recent adj experience.tn. |
| PP | Purpose | search | life same stress.pp. |
| CL | Classification | search | personality.cl.<br>'q'.cl. |
| AU | Author/s | search | amundson-marion-e.au. |
| PB | Publisher | search | university adj washington.pb. |
| PD | Publication Date | search<br>limit*<br>vparm | 1981.pd.<br>..L/pd > 80<br>@pd > 85 |
| PO | Population | search | patients.po. |
| LE | Levels | display only | --- |
| SC | Scores | search | total adj score.sc. |
| AD | Administration | search | group.ad. |
| MA | Manual | search | '19' adj pages.ma.<br>1986.ma. |
| RV | Reliability & Validity Data | search | subscores.rv. |
| PR | Price | display only | --- |
| TI | Time Requirements | display only | --- |
| RE | Reviewers | search | nichols-r$.re.<br>james-b-rounds.re. |
| CM | Comments | search | strengths.cm. |
| TX | Text | search | mathemat$ with ability.tx. |
| RR | Reviews | display only | --- |

** Limit is not available in menu-driven services for MMYD.*



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

AN (1012-327.)
OC FIELD
AN (1)
TN The Schedule of Recent Experience.
PP "To find out whether—and how often—stress-producing events have occurred in a client's life during the recent past".
CL Personality (9).
AU Amundson, Marion E.; Hart, Cheryl A.; Holmes, Thomas H.
PB University of Washington Press, P.O. Box 85569, Seattle, WA 98105.
PD 1981—86.
PO Patients/clients of all ages.
SC Total score only.
AD Group.
MA 1986, 19 pages.
PR 1987 price data $20 per 50 1-year forms; $30 per 50 3-year forms; $35 per folder including 50 1-year forms, template, and manual; $50 per folder including 50 3-year forms, template, and manual.
TI Administration time not reported.
RE Gerald L. Stone (The University of Iowa); John A. Zarske (Northern Arizona Psychological Services, P.C., Flagstaff, AZ).
CM Questionnaires for children under age 13 should be completed by their mothers.
TX 1 OF 1

The Schedule of Recent Experience. Purpose "To find out whether—and how often—stress-producing events have occurred in a client's life during the recent past." Patients/clients of all ages; 1981—86; SRE; questionnaires for children under age 13 should be completed by their mothers; 2 forms one-year test scale, three-year test scale; 1987 price data $20 per 50 1-year forms; $30 per 50 3-year forms; $35 per folder including 50 1-year forms, template, and manual ('86, 19 pages); $50 per folder including 50 3-year forms, template, and manual; administration time not reported; Marion E. Amundson, Cheryl A. Hart, and Thomas J. Holmes; University of Washington Press.".

RR 1 OF 31

Review of The Schedule of Recent Experience by GERALD L. STONE, Professor of Counseling Psychology and Director, University Counseling Service, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA.

2 OF 31

The Schedule of Recent Experience (SRE), according to the authors, "is a paper-and-pencil questionnaire which elicits information about the occurrence of particular events in an individual's recent life experience." Historically, the SRE is linked to the life chart approach of Meyer. The life chart displayed patient-generated information about their life situations and emotional responses chronologically, by year and age, and in a separate column were listed related diseases. Beginning in 1949, one of the authors (Holmes) and colleagues adopted the life chart method and used it in a large systematic study of some 5,000 cases, resulting in the selection of the life events for the SRE because of their occurrence prior to the onset of illness or clinical symptoms.

3 OF 31

The SRE format has changed considerably, culminating in a self-report questionnaire requiring identifying data and information about recent experience with 42 life events. These life events generally represent the ordinary, but also sometimes encompass extraordinary transactions and major areas of significance in the social world family, marriage, occupation, residence, peer relations, education, health, religion, and so on.

4 OF 31

Respondents are to record the number of times each of the 42 items occurred in particular time periods. The time intervals requested can be modified such as 10 years, 3 years, 1 year, daily reports, or a specified time period before and after an event.

5 OF 31

Frequency data (i.e., number of life events experienced) were used in earlier applications of the SRE in assessing the relationship of social change to many diseases. In order to enhance precision, Holmes and Rahe (1967) developed the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS). Psychophysics methodology for measuring sensation magnitude and intensity was influential in the approach for assigning weights to each of the SRE items. A sample of 394 subjects completed the SRE items plus Christmas. They provided magnitude estimations for the amount of change associated with each item, relative to marriage, which was given the arbitrary value of 500. The mean score, divided by 10, for each item for the entire sample was calculated, arranged in rank order, and these resulting values are used to weight the relative impact of the SRE life events.

.
.
.

28 OF 31

Chiriboga, D. A. (1978). Life event weighting systems A comparative analysis. Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 22, 47-55.

29 OF 31

Hurst, M. W. (1979). Life changes and psychiatric symptom development Issues of content, scoring, and clustering. In J. E. Barrett, R. M. Rose, & G. L. Klermon (Eds.), Stress and mental disorder, (pp. 17-36). New York Raven.

30 OF 31

American Psychiatric Association. (1980). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition. Washington, DC American Psychiatric Association.

31 OF 31

Perkins, D. V. (1982). The assessment of stress using life events scales. In L. Goldberger & S. Breznitz (Eds.), The handbook of stress, (pp. 320-331). New York The Free Press.